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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a project that was required for completing the Americans for Indian Opportunity Ambassador Program. The project resulted in development of a course on American Indian family history taught at the Native American Educational Services College (Chicago, Illinois). Part of the course required American Indian students to document their family histories. This project is important because researching family and community history leads to examining how conditions evolved over time and provides both enlightenment and perspective on current life situations. Secondly, very little has been written about American Indian families. Nearly all the research that exists on American Indian families has been written by non-Indians and often is not relevant to Indian community situations. Lastly, researching family and community history is conducive to developing an emotional understanding of American Indian history. Included is a syllabus developed for teaching a course on American Indian Family History. The class lectures and course readings examine the effects of attempting to assimilate American Indians into White society. Additionally, the course emphasizes boarding schools because of the detrimental effects they had on American Indian families and communities. Also included are a list of questions to consider when researching family history, and the author's own family history. (LP)

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ED 379 114

American Indian

Family History Project

by

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Americans for Indian Opportunity

Ambassador Program

November 15, 1993

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"In a sense, history is a luxury for people who have mastered the basic necessities of life and can afford time for contemplation. Seen another way, however, history empowers a people with knowledge of what they are and how they became so -- knowledge essential to planning future progress. A people without understanding of their history is a people adrift."

Francis Jennings
The Founders of America

INTRODUCTION

My project explores the positive aspects of American Indian values and tradition that have helped maintain American Indian families to the present. It focuses on the positive values and traditions that have been maintained throughout our turbulent history as a people. It also focuses on the positive cultural values from other cultures that have been incorporated into our value systems that have helped us survive as families and as a people.

My project consists of two parts: first, to develop and teach a class on American Indian families at NAES College in Chicago; and, second, to begin to write my own family history.

This type of project is important for several reasons. Firstly, doing family and community history encourages a way of thinking which can help in dealing with a great variety of current situations. Uncovering what has taken place over the years in a family, an organization or a community reveals the

origins of conditions, the causes of change, and the reasons for present circumstances. It becomes evident that not just one influence but a complex of forces affects most events. Examining how conditions evolve over a period of time and considering the impact of a wide variety of factors on that process, provides both enlightenment and perspective.

Secondly, very little has been written about American Indian families. The scholarship that does exist often focusses on social pathologies or are anthropological studies that focus mainly on structure and form. Nearly all of this research has been written by non-Indians and are often not relevant to Indian community situations.

Lastly, doing family and community history has many emotional rewards. Today many American Indians do not know the history of their tribes or of their families. If they do know some history it is oftentimes a negative view perpetuated by biased school/college textbooks. For instance a student recently questioned the leadership abilities of his tribal forefathers who signed a treaty in the early 1800's. He saw these leaders as "traitors." When we discussed this, I found that he had not considered <u>why</u> they had signed the treaty. He had not questioned what was going on with the tribe, whether famine or war or other exigent circumstances affected the leaders' decision-making. After thinking about what he had read in the treaty negotiation

documents, he remembers that "They did mention that they were hungry." He can now go back and re-read those negotiations from a more sympathetic perspective.

Learning about a past which has plainly and directly affected one's own life gives one a positive perspective on our capabilities and future as a people. After examining the "true" history of one's own people, one can only be amazed at our incredible resiliency and ability to survive despite many odds. It is exciting to understand for the first time why your grandparents treated your parents in a certain way or why your community developed certain traditions. It is satisfying to feel oneself part of something larger and more lasting than the moment, something that stretches both backward and forward in time.

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PART I: Developing a Model

Attached is a course syllabus and project assignment developed for teaching a course on American Indian Family History in the assimilation era. The class lectures in conjunction with the course readings examine the effects of attempts at assimilating American Indians into white society. The course placed a special emphasis on boarding schools because of the pernicious effects they had on American Indian families and communities. Some students of the class took a field trip in conjunction with the college's Tribal Research Center to the Marquette University Archives in Milwaukee to look at the Bureau of Catholic Indian Mission Records. The most popular item they viewed was the over 40,000 photographs in the collection. One student used the photographs for her project comparing the change in clothing of members of her tribe over time.

Although this class is currently in progress (as of November 15, 1993) and I do not know the results of individual student projects, the students have been extremely enthusiastic about researching and discovering their own family history. In their conversations inside and outside of class they talk about new understanding and connections they are making about family, culture and themselves. The main research tool used by the students with their projects is oral history although we have

encouraged students to do other historical research as well. As a part of their individual projects many students have interviewed members of their families and have even traveled to their home reservations to conduct interviews. One student who is from Alaska sent the questionnaire (see below) to her mother and aunt who answered every question two ways, from what it was like 100 years ago to what it is like today.

The students enjoyed the videos in the class immensely and also the readings. The reading they enjoyed the most though was the book The Middle Five by Francis LaFlesche because it is an American Indian autobiography. If I were to teach this course again I would redo the readings to include more first person accounts from a Native perspective such as The Middle Five.

As with most courses taught at NAES, this course was taught to emphasize leadership skills. We emphasized that to be an effective leader a person needs to "Know who you are and where you came from." The majority of NAES students are urban Indians and adults (average age 35). Looking at one's own background is of major importance today within Indian communities, especially within urban Indian communities. As these students begin to learn American Indian history the issues of identity often arise. These students, despite their strong connection with their modern Indian cultures, often lack an understanding of the historical context of these issues. The students at the Chicago Campus of

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NAES were ideal for this model because they come from a variety of tribal backgrounds with a variety of tribal knowledge and personal history. This project was valid for all the students.

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COURSE SYLLABUS

Social, Cultural and Legal Perspectives:
The American Indian Family

6 Credits
Fall Semester, 1993
NAES College-Chicago Campus

Instructors: Rosalyn LaPier
Geri Shangreaux

Course Description: This course will explore what positive aspects of American Indian values and tradition have helped maintain American Indian families to the present. During this course students will be given a historical overview of the federal government's attempts to disrupt American Indian families. It will focus primarily on the Assimilation Era (1871-1934) and continue into the modern period. In conjunction students will work on an individual project focusing on their own family history.

Instructors' Expectations: The students are expected to learn critical thinking and analytical skills and to gain a historical understanding of governmental policies in relation to American Indian families. In addition, students are expected to attend class weekly (and to arrive by 6 o'clock), to prepare their reading and written assignments before each class as indicated on the course schedule, and to participate in the weekly class discussions.

The students should expect the instructors to be well prepared for class each week, to give them timely feedback on their progress in the course, and to be available to offer any additional help the student needs during office hours or at other arranged times.

Class Schedule:

September 13: Introduction to Course and Class Project

September 20:
TOPIC: Historical Perspective: Traditional Family Structure and Societal Roles
READINGS: Foster, Martha Harroun. "Of Baggage and Bondage: Gender and Status Among Hidatsa and Crow Women," American Indian Culture and Research Journal, Vol. 17, No. 2.
Williams, Walter. The Spirit and the Flesh,

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Introduction, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

September 27:
Class discussion on projects and methods of research, tour of library and basic instruction on using computers at NAES.

October 4:
TOPIC: Historical Perspective: Government Attempts to Subvert American Indian Family and Societal Structure
READINGS: Lacey, Linda J. "The White Man's Law and the American Indian Family in the Assimilation Era," Arkansas Law Review, 40:327, 1986

October 11:
Video: Indians, Outlaws and Angie Debo
Class discussion on projects and research design.

October 18:
TOPIC: Historical Perspective: Government Attempts to Subvert American Indian Family and Societal Structure
READINGS: Bonnin, Gertrude. Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians, Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, 1924.
Campbell, Gregory. "Medicine as Civilization: Health Practices and Cultural Oppression Among the Northern Cheyennes of Montana," unpublished article.

October 25:
Video: In the White Man's Image
Class discussion on projects and research design.

November 1:
TOPIC: Boarding School Experience
READINGS: Francis LaFlesche, The Middle Five

November 8:
Video: Healing the Hurt
Class discussion on projects and research design.
Field Trip: Marquette University Archives, Bureau of Catholic Indian Mission Records

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November 15:
Class discussion on projects and research design. Also, meet individually with instructors to review rough draft of project.

November 22:
TOPIC: Modern Times: World War II, Termination and Relocation
READINGS: Selections from Fixico's Termination and Relocation and Bernstein's American Indians and World War II.

November 29:
Special Guest: Brenda K. Manuelito, Newberry Library, will speak on her research on Intermarriage between Navajos and Anglos.

December 6:
Oral presentations of projects to class.

December 13:
FINAL CLASS: Oral presentations of projects to class.

Course Assignments: Students are expected to work on and finish one major course project.

Note: Attendance in class is compulsory. If you must miss a class for some reason, let your instructor know ahead of time. (Don't just leave a message with Leonard!)

Grading Scheme: All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade.
Attendance and class participation: 25%
Final Project: 75%

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Social, Cultural and Legal Perspectives:
The American Indian Family

Family History Project

Topic: Explore three generations of your family. (e.g. yourself, your parents and your grandparents or your children, yourself and your parents.)

Specifics: Students will be expected to write a minimum of 10 pages, double spaced (these 10 pages do not include your family tree). In addition the student is expected to complete a family tree (three generations) of his or her family.

When writing your family history try to find patterns within your family that define your family in unique ways. Use the four page list of questions (attached) as a guideline for examining your family. Those questions are divided into 8 major groups: Family Relationships, Health of the Family, Location/Movement of the Family, Family Economics, Daily Living, Education, Military Involvement and Public Affairs. In addition look at other ways that your family defines itself as a family such as religious activity, community service, values, music, hobbies (e.g. beading or quiltmaking), attending pow-wows, membership in societies, etc. It may be necessary for you to incorporate tribal or Indian or church history into your project, to help understand your own family's history. We suggest looking at only one or two aspects of your family and expanding on those things or you may look at several at once.

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Class Project: Family History/ Social History

Below is a possible list of questions to consider when doing your family history project. These questions were adapted from the book, Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You by David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty.

Family Relationships:

1) Who was considered to be a member of the family? Why were they considered a member of the family? Blood relative or not?
2) What considerations were involved in the formation of the family unit, whatever form it took?
3) How did the people meet who eventually formed a couple?
4) What was the relative social and economic status of each member of the couple? What was the effect of any differences?
5) How did courtship and the decision to form a family occur?
6) If a couple later separated, why and how?
7) What were the respective roles of men and women in the family?
8) How and by whom were decisions made? Did males and females have different areas of responsibility for decision making?
9) How do men and women of different generations within the family compare in age at marriage, age at birth of first child, number of pregnancies and live childbirths, and age at birth of last child?
10) Was the birth of a children evenly spaced, planned or unexpected?
11) Where were children born?
12) What role, if any, did family members or outsiders -- friends, neighbors, professionals -- play in childbirth?
13) How have child-rearing practices and the roles of mothers and fathers changed over the years?
14) How were children regarded before they were old enough to take care of themselves or to work?
15) What expectations regarding work and other responsibilities did each generation have for persons of different sexes and ages?
16) On what basis and at what age were persons considered to be adults?
17) How long did fathers and mothers continue to have authority over their sons and daughters?
18) Why and how did relationships between parents and children change as people age?
19) How have separation, divorce, or death affected the family?
20) What family crises occurred and how were they handled?
21) Has the family had any dominant figures, superstars, outcasts, or embarrassments? What has been the relative esteem for men and women?
22) Who cared for the sick, aged, or dependent family members?
23) What were the family's customs in the event of a death?

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24) Where, if anyplace, were family members buried?
25) Who inherited what?

Health and Physical Characteristics:
1) What did family members look like?
2) Were there any recurring physical characteristics (stature, complexion, or distinctive features, for example) that made family members similar in appearance?
3) What was the general condition of their health?
4) Did individuals or the family as a whole suffer from any chronic illnesses, mental problems, disabling injuries, or deformities?
5) Did men and women in the family generally live longer lives or die young? What did they die from?
6) What relationship, if any, did the family maintain with a physician or other health services?
7) Were "home remedies" commonly used or passed along through the generations?

Location and Movement:
1) Where has the family lived?
2) How and by whom were places of residence determined?
3) Who first migrated to the United States or to the community in which the family became more permanently located? Who followed?
4) Did the family move from place to place within the community?
5) Why were moves undertaken -- to change jobs, for health reasons, to escape unsatisfactory conditions, or for other reasons?
6) How were moves made?
7) What difficulties did moving cause for various members of the family?
8) How was the place of origin remembered?
9) Did friends, boarders, or servants live with the family?
10) Did married sons or daughters continue to live in their parents' households?
11) Did elderly persons live in their own homes, with their children, in retirement communities, or in old-age homes?
12) Did related families live in the same neighborhood or community?

Family Economics:
1) How did members of the family earn a living?
2) Specifically, what kinds of work did they do as, for example, machine operators, small-business proprietors, clerks, farmers, secretaries, professional people, or executives?
3) How did their work change through the years, even though they held the same job?
4) How were occupational choices made?

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5) What part did an individual's sex play in determining occupation, opportunity, family support, and success?
6) What were reasons for changing jobs?
7) Did family members help each other in obtaining jobs or in developing farms or businesses?
8) What were family members' relations with employers? With unions? With other workers, farmers, or business people?
9) Did they participate in strikes?
10) What was the family's general or evolving economic status?
11) Were all family members expected to bring all or part of their earnings home?
12) How and by whom were family finances decided and handled?
13) To what age and extent were sons and daughters supported financially?
14) What was the general outlook on material possessions?
15) How did the family cope with hard times?
16) Did charity or public assistance (welfare) provide part or all of the family's income?
17) How did the family feel about such measures?
18) What did family members feel about their economic status, ambitions for advancement, and "keeping up with the Joneses"?

Daily Living:
1) What were the daily routines of family members?
2) What were the roles and responsibilities of individual family members?
3) How was failure to conform to family expectations or values treated?
4) How did mothers and fathers decide upon and care out discipline of sons and daughters?
5) How has the family's diet and clothing changed over the years?
6) How did changing technology affect the family; that is, when and how did such things as cars, refrigerators, telephones, radios, vacuum cleaners, televisions, microwave ovens, and so forth come into use, and what impact did they have?
7) What kind of family celebrations and reunions were held?
8) How were holidays and special occasions observed?
9) Did the family use alcoholic beverages routinely, on festive occasions, seldom, or not at all?
10) Did alcohol cause problems?
11) Who were family members friends: relatives, neighbors, fellow workers, others of the same gender, ethnic group, or religion?
12) How were friendships formed and maintained?
13) In what kinds of social activities did the family engage?
14) To what churches and voluntary organizations did family members belong? What was the extent of their involvement, and what effects did this have?
15) How did they participate in the life of the community in

which they lived?
16) What were their attitudes toward people in the community of other faiths, different ethnic or racial backgrounds, or lower and higher economic status?

Education:
1) What sort of educational training took place within the family?
2) What value did the family place upon formal education?
3) Did expectations differ for boys and girls?
4) What level of schooling did family members achieve?
5) What schools did they attend?
6) Did they serve apprenticeships, undergo special training in the military, or obtain other nonschool education? If they went to college, what did they study?
7) What do they remember about their teachers?
8) What part did their education play in their later vocations and their avocations?
9) Did lack of education hinder them?
10) What unusual skills and abilities did they possess?
11) What attitudes did they have about persons less or better educated than themselves?
12) What encouragement did they offer to others in the family who sought schooling?
13) By what criteria -- financial, educational, occupational, or social -- did the family measure success?

Military:
1) What was the nature and extent of military service by family members?
2) What were their attitudes about it?
3) What did they do during wartime?
4) What were their experiences with defense plants, war information and propaganda, rationing and price controls, war bond drives, changes in the community?
5) How did wars disrupt their lives?
6) What ties with military or service organizations were maintained once active duty ended?
7) What use was made of veterans' benefits?
8) How did attitudes toward wars and the military change through the years?

Public Affairs:
1) Did family members become involved in community affairs, charitable activities, reform movements, or local government?
2) How and why did they or did they not participate? Were some activities considered appropriate for only one sex? What and to what effect?

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3) What were their attitudes toward politics, political parties, and prominent local, state, and national political figures?
4) What was their political outlook (conservative, moderate, liberal, radical, erratic), and how was it shown in their political actions?
5) How did political views and actions differ within the family by age, sex, or other characteristics? What were the consequences of differences?
6) Did they participate in party activities? What party?
7) Did they benefit from being socially or politically active?
8) Did each generation follow the same pattern? Why or why not?

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PART II: My Family History

OVERVIEW

I come from two very different groups in Indian country. On my mothers side of the family I am Blackfeet and on my fathers side of the family I am mixed-blood Chippewa, a member of the Little Shell Band of Chippewa Indians of Montana. These two groups have very different histories and very different situations today.

The Blackfeet remain in their traditional homelands. My mothers family has lived in Montana and Alberta, Canada since time immemorial. My fathers family migrated to Montana 150 years ago and were part of a larger movement of mixed-blood Indians who migrated both west and north from the great lakes region during and after the fur trade era. The Blackfeet have signed treaties with both the United States government and the Canadian government. The Blackfeet have a reservation in the United States and three reserves in Canada and are recognized by the governments of both countries. The Little Shell have no land and are not recognized by the United States, although some Little Shell were incorporated into other tribal groups in Montana.

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THE BLACKFEET

In my family history I want to eventually focus on the changing roles of women within Blackfeet culture and within my family. I would also like to focus on the impact of assimilation efforts had on my family, such as the boarding school experiance.

In the origin story of the Blackfeet, Old Man Napi and Old Woman Napi create the world together. What is significant about them creating the world together is the prominent role that Old Woman Napi plays. When the federal government began their attempts to assimilate the Blackfeet in the late 1800's a significant effort was made to change the traditional gender role structure of the Blackfeet to reflect that of Anglo society and in particular the Judeo-Christian tradition. Thus the origin story of the Blackfeet was to be replaced by the origin story of the Bible, making both man and God more prominent than woman. Compared to the biblical creation story which establishes a hierarchy of God, then man, then woman, the Blackfeet creation story sets "God" or Napi as parallel to his wife, Old Woman Napi.

In other stories women often play prominent roles such as in the origin of marriage (where women got to chose who they married) or in the introduction of sacred religious objects to Blackfeet life such as the Beaver Bundle, the Thunder Pipe and the Buffalo Rock. Thus the position of Blackfeet women is firmly planted in Blackfeet oral history. Although the role women cannot

be viewed as truely egalitarian with that of men, the old society of the Blackfeet required considerable cooperation between genders in order to function. Thus a balance existed between the roles of men and women in Blackfeet society with neither having dominion over the other.

THE LITTLE SHELL BAND OF CHIPPEWA

Around the turn of the century my family lived outside of St. Peter's Mission outside of Great Falls, Montana. The purpose of the mission was to service the Blackfeet just north of them but they ended up mostly servicing the mixed-blood population which congregated around the mission and which had a long history of being involved in the Catholic church. As early as 1885 it was clear that the mixed-blood population in Montana was not a prosperous lot. In a letter to director of the Catholic Indian Missions, the head of St. Peter's Mission wrote that they had a lot of "half-breeds" living around and mission and that they were "very poor" and worse off than the Indians.

Besides the fact that my family descended from a group of mix-bloods living at the mission my other major interest involves looking at those Indian groups which are marginal to both the larger society and to Native American society such as the Little Shell. Most people who study American Indians either research a tribe, a reservation, and/or interaction with whites. I am

primarily interested in looking at those peoples who do not fall into either of those categories.

In a larger context, I am interested in understanding the formation or creation of these marginal groups. How did they form? How did they become marginal? What is their history? There are currently dozens of Indian groups trying to gain federal recognition. There is a paucity of extant literature regarding these groups, including the Little Shell. My proposed study of this federally unrecognized group will begin with their displacement from the tribes from which they originated, will follow their unsettling story through their years on the fringes of frontier society, and will finish by examining their role in modern Montana.

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FIRST GENERATION

1. Rosalyn Rae LAPIER was born on 23 Feb 1964 in Portland, Oregon.

SECOND GENERATION

2. William James LAPIER was born on 19 Oct 1935 in Great Falls, Montana.
3. Angeline Eloise WALL was born on 4 Oct 1940 in Heart Butte, Montana.

THIRD GENERATION

4. Arthur Baptiste LAPIER was born on 1905 in Augusta, Montana at Ford Creek; died on 1992 in Yakima, Washington; buried in Augusta, Montana.
6. Thomas Francis WALL was born on 21 Mar 1911; died on 28 Feb 1973 in Browning, Montana; buried in Browning, Montana.
7. Annie Dorothy MAD PLUME.

FOURTH GENERATION

8. John R. LAPIER was born on 1882; died on 1955; buried in Augusta, Montana.
9. Mary A. (LAPIER) was born on 1884; died on 1926; buried in Augusta, Montana.
12. Frank WALL was born on 1867 in Massachusetts.
13. Mary Ann CONKLIN was born on 27 Apr 1877 in Fort Benton, Montana.
14. Elmer (Rattler) MADPLUME was born on 1875.
15. Minnie CARLOS was born on 1888.

FIFTH GENERATION

16. Francois Xavier LAPIERRE was born on 19 Mar 1850; died on 18 Jun 1928; buried in Augusta, Montana.
17. Mary Rose SWAN was born on 3 Feb 1862; died on 2 Jul 1948; buried in Augusta, Montana.
24. John WALL.
26. Pat CONKLIN.
27. Long Time Bird Woman.
28. MADPLUME was born on 1849.
29. Kills At Night was born on 1860.
30. James WILLIAMS.
31. Not Real Beaver Woman.

SIXTH GENERATION

32. Antoine LAPIERRE.
33. Catherine (LAPIERRE).
34. James SWAN, Sr. was born on 1818; died on 1 Nov 1906; buried in Augusta, Montana.
35. Marie (SWAN) was born on 1832; died on 22 May 1912; buried in Augusta, Montana.
56. Taking Calf.
57. Long Sitting.
58. Three Eagles.
59. Giving Many Things to the Sun.
62. Spotted Bear.
63. (Big) Panther Woman.

SEVENTH GENERATION

112. Sensible Child.
113. Killed A Man.
114. Three Eagles.
115. Different Kill.
116. Father Unknown.
117. Different Kills.
124. Pemmican.
125. Under Good Looking Woman.
126. Running After Buffalo.
127. Mother Unknown.